



Business Classification Scheme

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1.0 Introduction

A business classification scheme (BCS) describes the business activities undertaken by an organisation, whether alone or in partnership. By taking account of the complete organisation and all of its business functions, a BCS allows us to structure our information so that it remains relevant in the event of staffing changes or organisational restructuring. It also helps us to ensure that good records management practice is applied to all records and information generated by the Council.

A BCS is linked to business function, **not** ownership. This is essential for extracting maximum value from our information assets and for legislative compliance. When information structures are linked to *ownership*, this inhibits access to information and creates inconsistency across the organisation. In contrast, *functional classification* allows us to manage and retrieve our information easily. This is particularly important for compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, which requires the Council to respond to requests for information within limited time periods.

The Midlothian Council BCS should be consulted as a high-level structure for information, not a detailed file plan. Individual services should base their local filing structures on the BCS, and create more detailed file plans based on their individual service's activities and security needs.

2.0 Overview

The current BCS is the first such classification scheme to be implemented at Midlothian Council. As a result, it identifies only the Council's top level functions and activities (BCS1 and BCS2). It is intended that subsequent versions will include more detailed levels of classification, which will be linked to specific record types as follows:

BCS1: Function
BCS2: Activity
BCS3: Transaction
BCS4: Record

These record types will link directly to retention rules via the Corporate Retention Schedule.

The current BCS is divided into 26 functions, which correspond to the Council's Corporate Retention Schedule. Within each function are listed a number of activities relevant to each service.

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3.0 Legislative framework

The BCS has been created with reference to the following legislation and standards:

Legislation

- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Standards

- Scottish Council on Archives Business Classification Scheme

4.0 Intended audience

All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that records in their care are properly managed, and that the correct classifications are applied to them.

5.0 Scope

The BCS applies to records in all formats, both paper and electronic.

6.0 Definitions

Classification: the categorisation of records (both electronic and paper) into hierarchical classes of activities and functions.

Record: 'information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.'¹ Certain records management procedures, such as registration and official retention periods, only apply to original records, not copies. Copies can be treated as documents, and official retention periods do not apply. **However, all documents have to be handled securely in line with information security and data protection policies and procedures, even if they are not official records.**

Retention schedule: a record which sets out how long particular types of records should be kept, and what disposal action should be taken.

7.0 Policy statement

See the Business Classification Scheme on the Records Management pages of the Council Intranet.

8.0 Positions responsible for compliance

- All staff are responsible for ensuring that the BCS is correctly applied to their records. Staff are also responsible for seeking managerial approval for change requests and submitting them to the Records Officer.

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- Managers are responsible for authorising change requests and overseeing compliance with the BCS within their service areas.
- Information Management Group (IMG) representatives are responsible for promoting and monitoring compliance within their service areas.
- The Records Officer is responsible for managing changes to the BCS and monitoring quality.

9.0 Related documents

- Records Management Plan
- Corporate Retention Schedule
- Information Management Strategy

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